

# Lower Columbia River Sturgeon Annual Update and Policy Review

Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission Meeting

Olympia, Washington  
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Fish Program

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# Purpose

- Provide annual review of stock status and fisheries (included in Commission Policy C-3001 “2011-2013 Lower Columbia Sturgeon Management”)
- Review policy and consider adoption of new policy
  - Current policy expires December 31, 2013

# Background

- The Lower Columbia white sturgeon population inhabits the lower Columbia River and tributaries below Bonneville Dam and includes fish that migrate to marine areas, coastal bays, Puget Sound, and their tributaries
- Populations above Bonneville Dam, including the Snake River and the upper Columbia River are considered separate populations and are not included in this briefing

# Annual Review Topics

- Stock status
- Predation rates
- Review in-season management actions
- Accounting of fish left unharvested
- Review of harvest outside lower Columbia River
- By-catch in all fisheries
- Recommended management changes
- Other pertinent information

# Population Assessment Tools

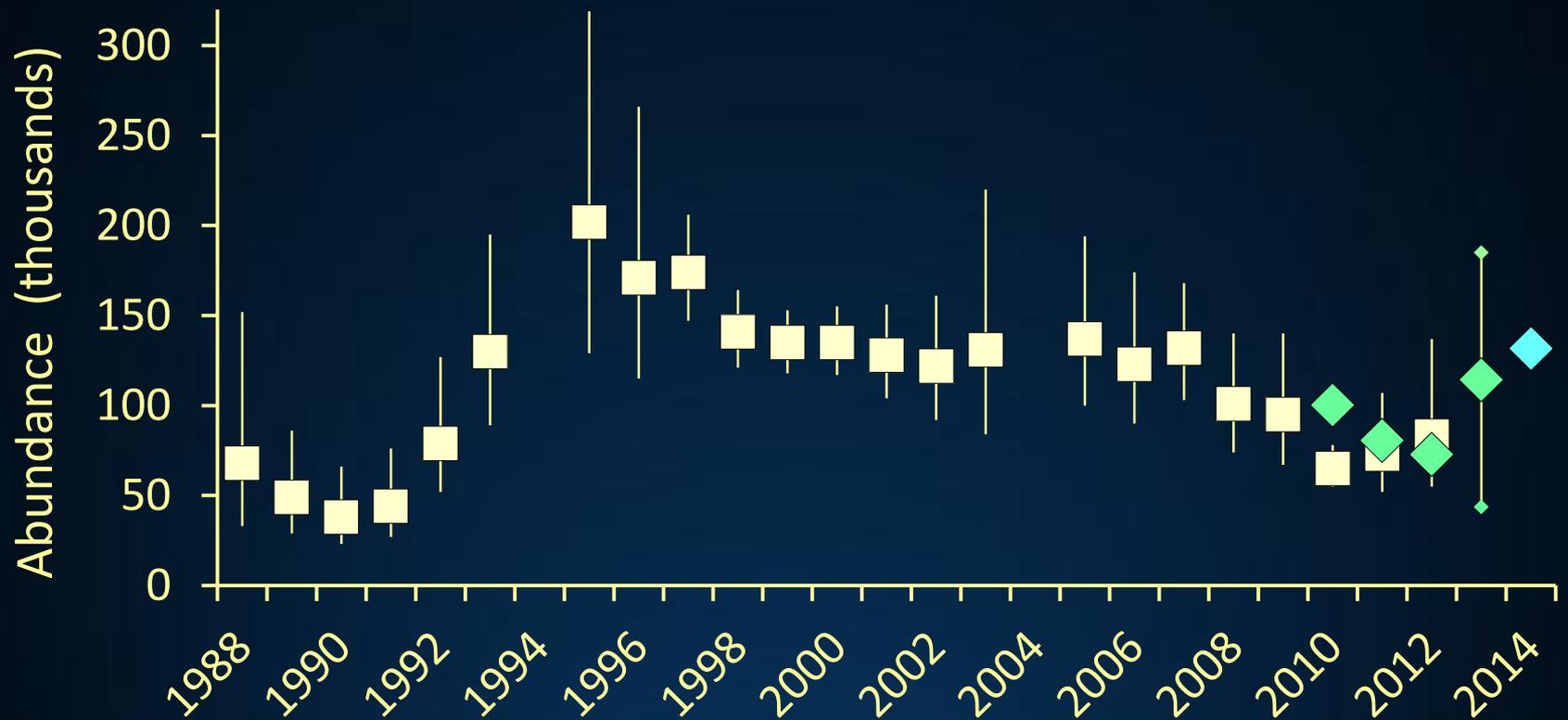
- Abundance estimation
  - Two mark-and-recapture approaches:
    - 1) Historic approach samples harvest for tag recoveries
      - Results available 15 months after tagging
    - 2) Research setline survey to obtain recoveries
      - Results available within a few months of tagging
      - Includes most size-segments of the population
- Sport fishery CPUE
- Sub-yearling productivity indexing

# Population Estimates Legal-Size Fish

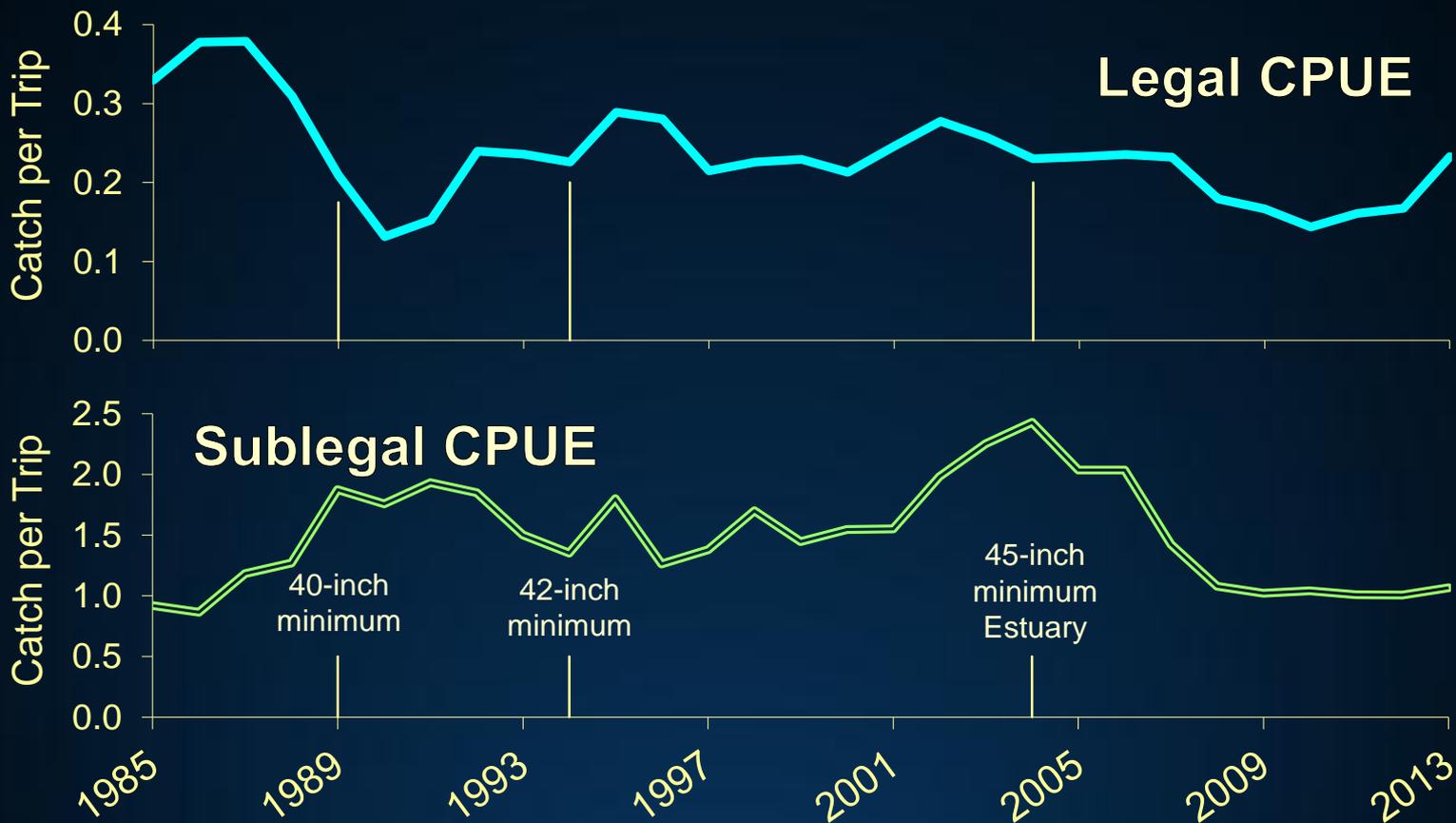
Year	Historic method	Setline method		Harvest guideline
		Estimate	Projected	
2009	95,000	--	--	40,000
2010	65,300	100,200	--	24,000
2011	72,800	80,500	77,000	17,000
2012	83,400	72,700	65,000	10,400
2013	--	114,200 <sup>1</sup>	74,300	10,105
2014	--	--	131,700 <sup>1</sup>	--

<sup>1</sup> Preliminary.

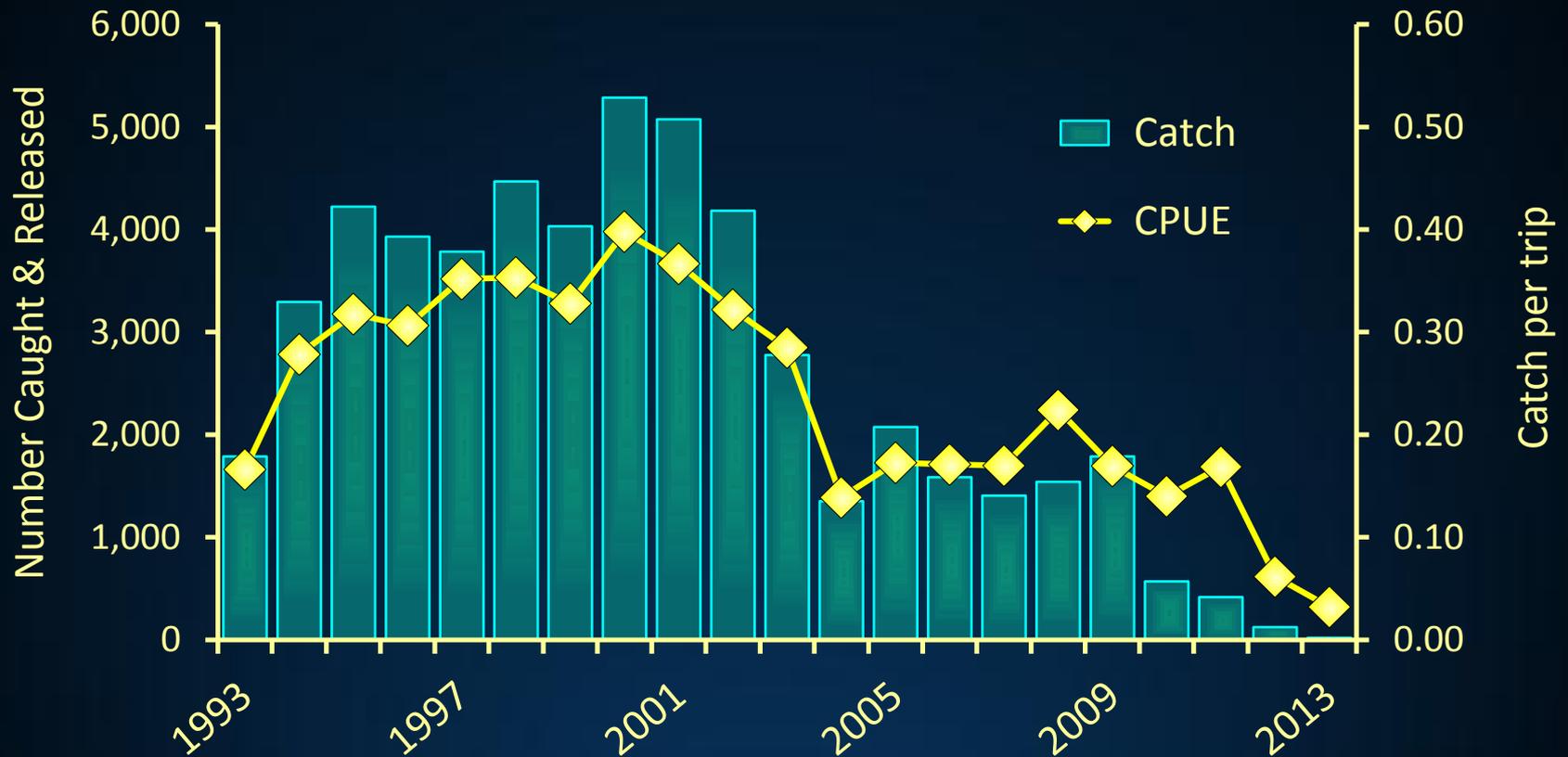
# Recent Trends in Abundance Legal-Size Fish



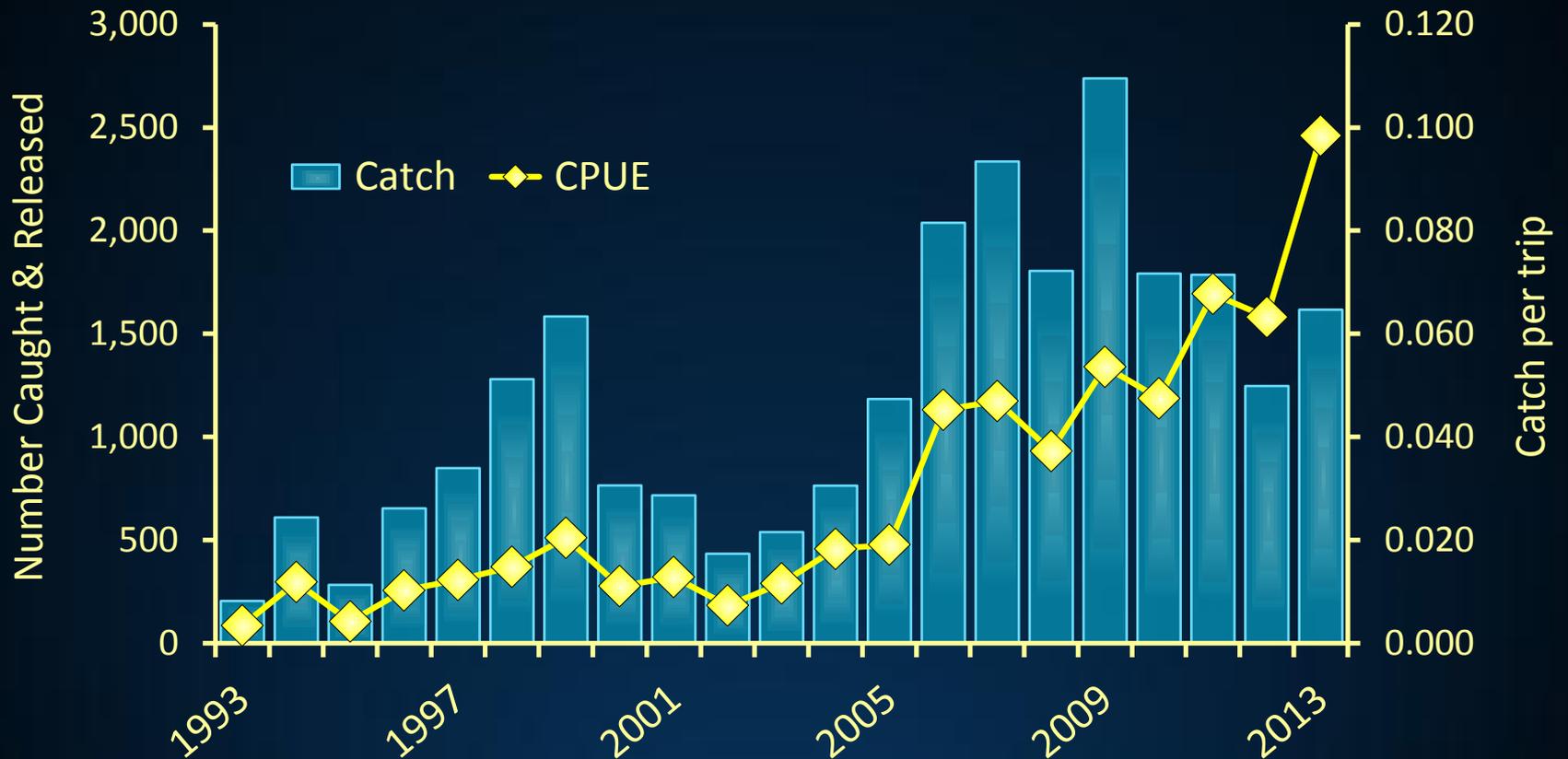
# Sport Fishery Catch Trends



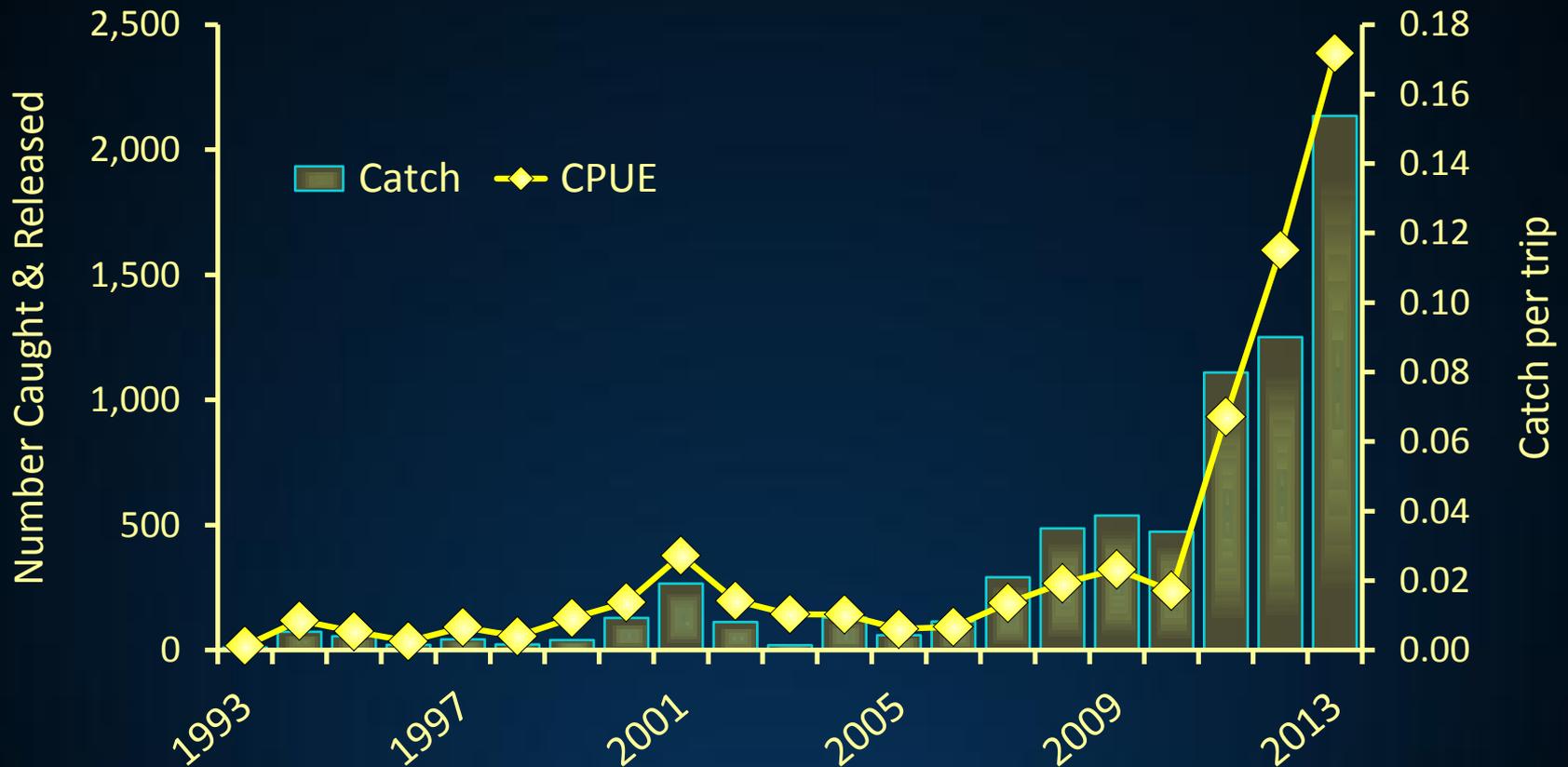
# Over Legal-size Catch Trend Columbia River Gorge



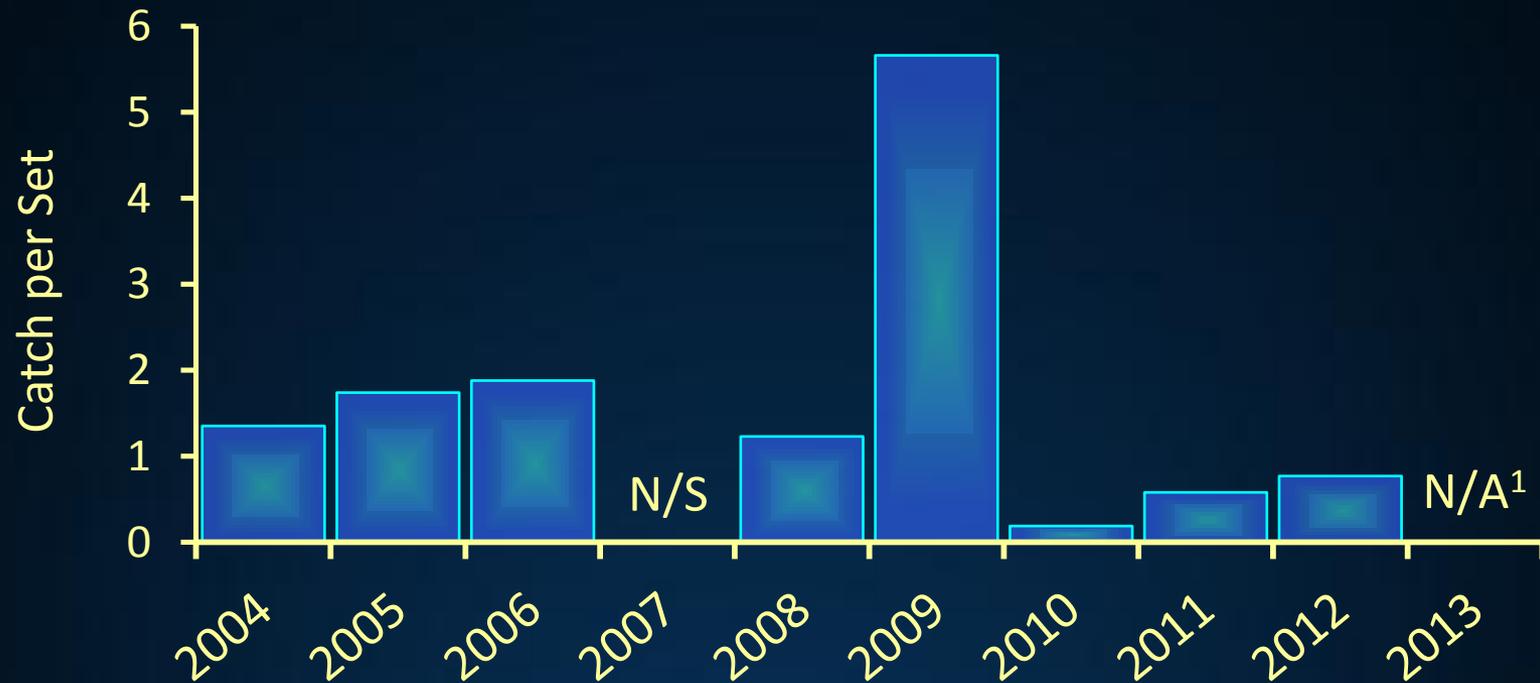
# Over Legal-size Catch Trend Estuary



# Over Legal-size Catch Trend Willamette River

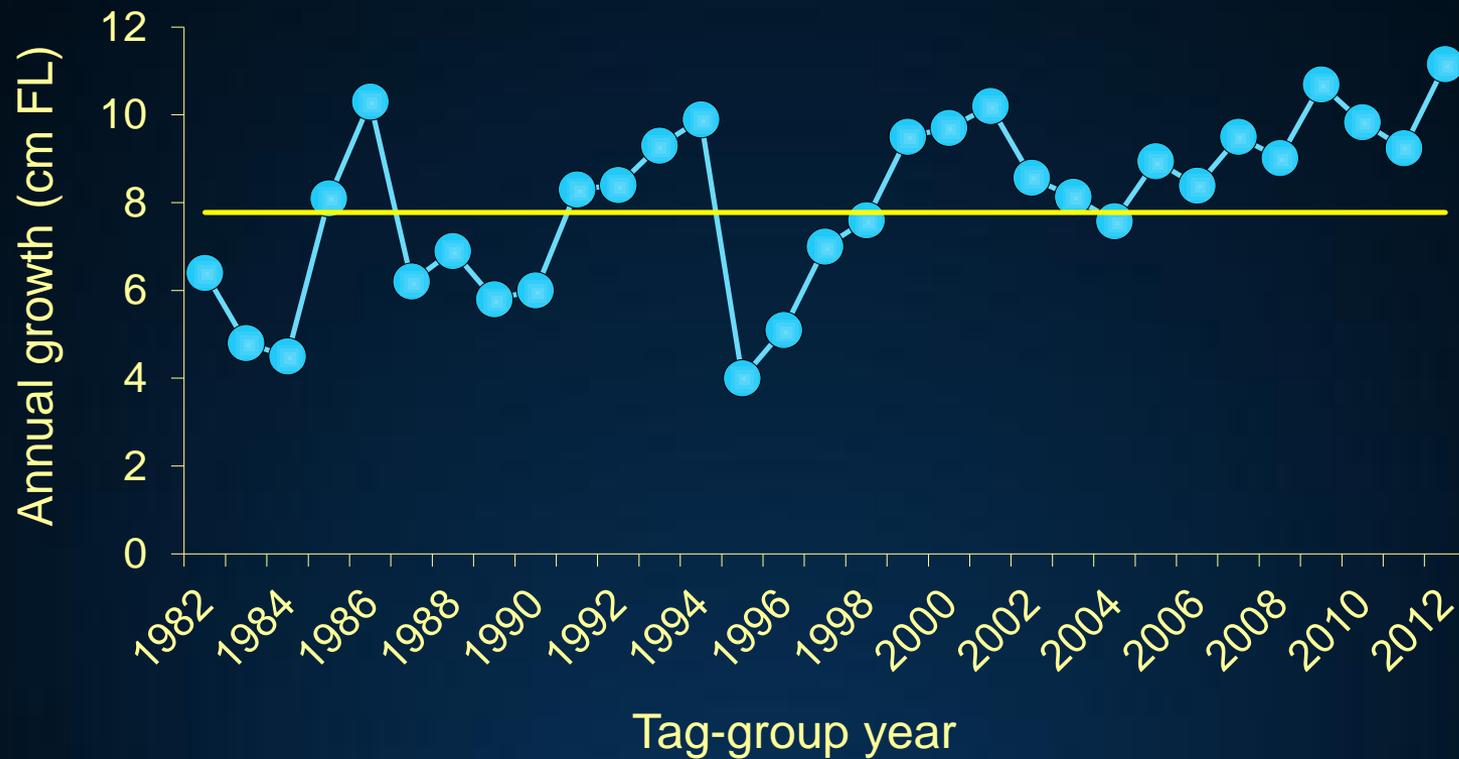


# Sub-Yearling Production Index

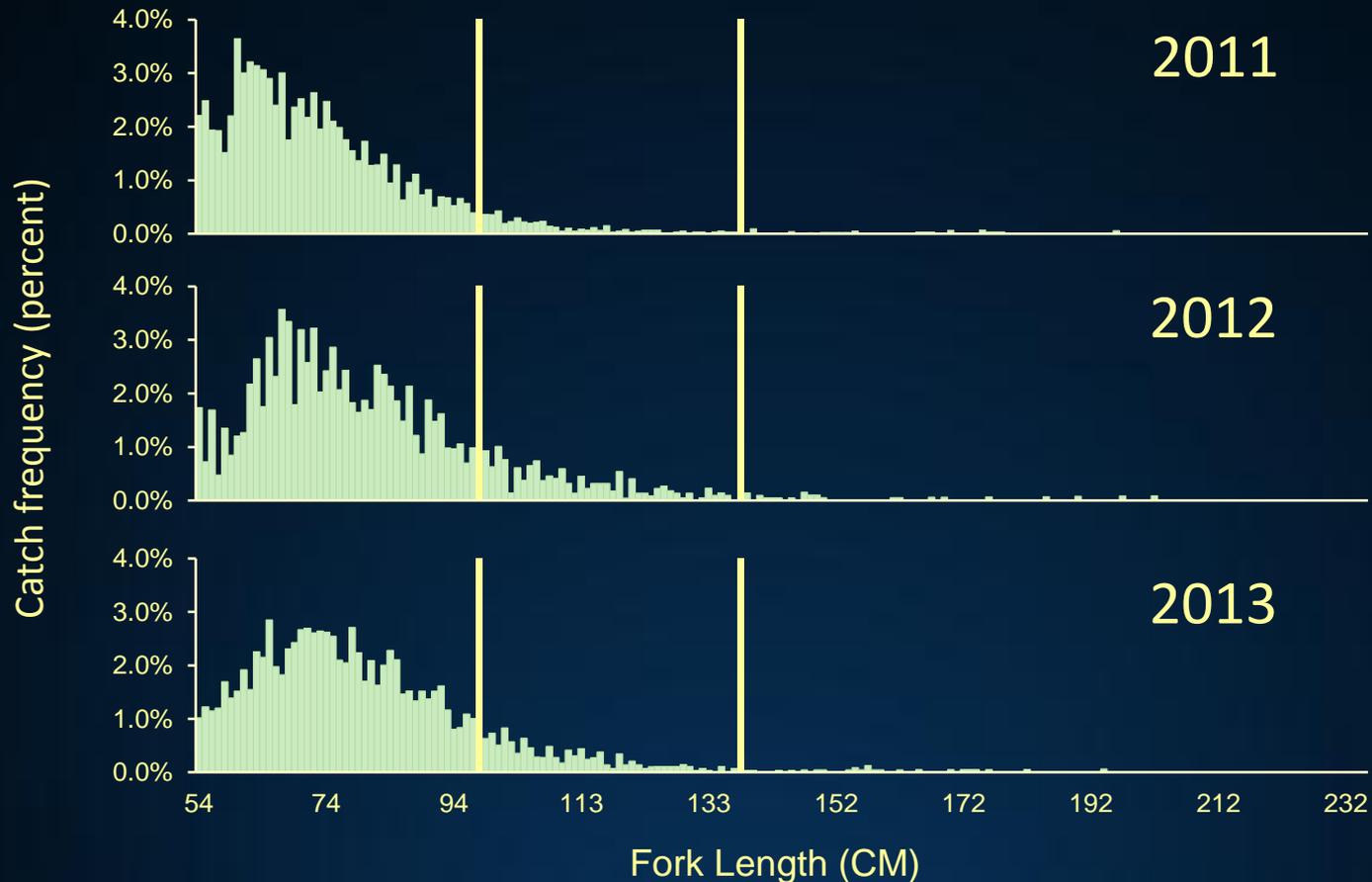


<sup>1</sup> Sampling for Age-0 sturgeon takes place from November to early December.

# Annual Fish Growth Rates



# Setline Catch-Frequency by Size



# Predation of White Sturgeon

## USACE Bonneville Dam Observations



# Policy Guidance for 2013 and 2014

## Harvest Rate

- Reduce the 16% target rate implemented in 2012 by 15%, to 13.6% for 2013

## Annual Limit

- Reduce from 5 fish to 2 fish effective May 1, 2013

## Retention Prohibition

- Prohibit retention in the Columbia River below Bonneville Dam, the WA coast, Puget Sound, and their tributaries, effective Jan. 1, 2014

# 2013 In-season Management Recreational Fisheries

Fishery		Proposed	Implemented
Estuary	7 days/week	Jan 1 – Apr 30	as planned
		May 11 – Jun 30	May 11 – Jun 20
Above Wauna	3 days/week	Jan 1 – Jun 15	as planned
		Oct 19 – Dec 31	season rescinded
Willamette River		Jul 11-13, Jul 18-20	as planned, plus Jul 25-28, Oct 19

# 2013 In-season Management Commercial Fisheries

Fishery period	<u>Allocation by period</u>	
	Proposed	Implemented
Winter/Spring	280	289
Summer	300	326
Early Fall	600	719
Late Fall	440	324
Safe	<u>400</u>	<u>354</u>
Total	2,020	2,012

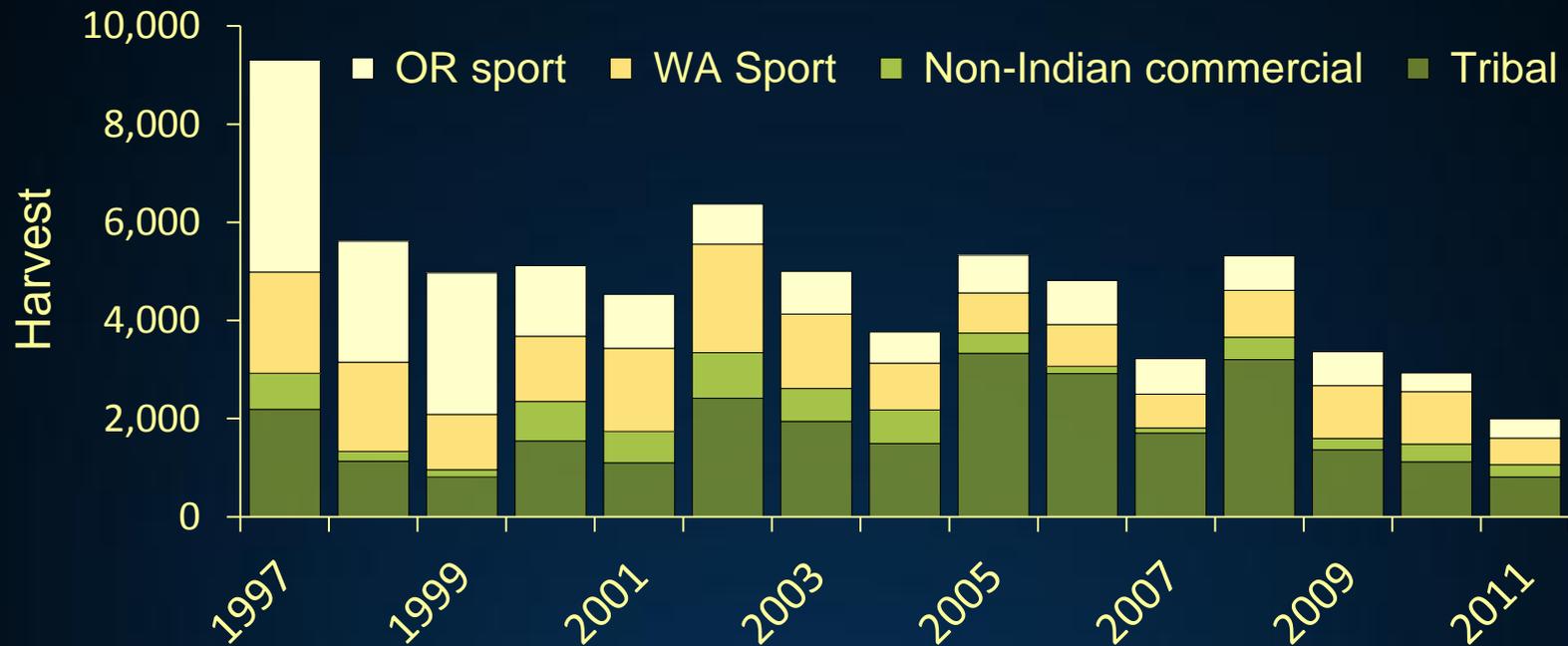
# 2013 Management Harvest Lower Columbia River Fisheries

Fishery	Allocation	Harvest <sup>1</sup>
Sport – Estuary	4,042	4,559
Sport – Above Wauna	2,021	1,942
Sport – Willamette River <sup>2</sup>	<u>1,733</u>	<u>1,410</u>
Sport total	7,796	7,911
Commercial	<u>2,021</u>	<u>2,012</u>
Combined total	9,817	9,923

<sup>1</sup> Preliminary

<sup>2</sup> Includes 520 fish baseline

# Harvest Outside Columbia River



# Sturgeon By-catch

## Fall 2012 Commercial Fishery Monitoring

Catch	Numbers observed	Total landings	% Landings observed
Number drifts monitored	437		
Sturgeon			
Legal kept	64	1,346	4.7%
Legal released	71		
Sublegal released	240		
Over-legal released	52		
Green sturgeon released	1		

# Released Sturgeon 2013 Recreational Fisheries

Fishery area	Sublegal size	Legal size	Over legal-size	Total
Estuary <sup>1</sup>	14,458	792	1,617	16,867
Above Wauna <sup>1</sup>	18,787	335	301	19,423
Willamette River <sup>2</sup>	<u>14,581</u>	<u>3,157</u>	<u>2,135</u>	<u>19,873</u>
Combined total	47,826	4,284	4,053	56,163

<sup>1</sup> Catch estimates through July.

<sup>2</sup> Catch estimates through October.

# Recommended Management Changes

- Commission Policy C-3001 was adopted for a 3-year period and expires Dec. 31, 2013
- A new Policy needs to be adopted to take effect in January 2014
- Draft new policy provided
  - Minor changes – but re-organized
  - Recommend longer-term policy

# Other Information

## Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission

- Adopted 2-fish annual limit effective May 1, 2013
- Adopted retention prohibition for Columbia River and tributaries below Bonneville Dam and for Oregon coastal estuaries and river systems, effective Jan. 1, 2014
- Both regulations consistent with WDFW

# Thank You



Cindy LeFleur, Fish Program Manager, Region 5  
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Additional slides

# Trend in Sea Lion Numbers

## USACE Bonneville Dam Observations

